HATE CRIMES
in CS

July 8, 1999

Information regarding hate crimes reporting and statistics from conversation with Sergeant Fletcher Howard, Community Relations Officer for the Colorado Springs Police Department.

CSPD does collect statistics on hate crimes under the voluntary federal program established by the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990. Although this report is apparently not available to the general public. Hate crimes statistics are not included in the comprehensive CSPD annual report.

The CSPD has one person responsible for investigating and determining if reported hate crimes can be confirmed according to the department's definition. This person is the intelligence unit and I was under the impression that confirming hate crime reports was only one of his/her responsibilities.

CSPD began tracking hate crimes statistics in 92 or 93 and the intelligence unit was assigned the duty of confirming these reports at the same time.

Officers receive about 1-4 hours of in-service training on hate crimes as part of their annual training.

The Community Relations Officer is the liaison to the community at large, including ethnic minorities, religious groups, etc.

Following media inquiries sparked by the murder of Matthew Shepherd, CSPD compiled statistics on the past few years. Sergeant Howard estimated that the majority of the reported and confirmed hate crimes were assaults which involved name-calling. He felt the second most common type of local hate crime was graffiti on churches, synagogues, and mosques slandering their religion.

1998
74 reports of hate crimes
28 confirmed
46 unconfirmed

1997
44 reports of hate crimes
24 confirmed

1996
32 reports of hate crimes
21 confirmed

1995
20 reports of hate crimes
13 confirmed

Sergeant Howard also mentioned that the vast majority of the confirmed hate crimes were not prosecuted as such because the Colorado Ethnic Intimidation Act is very difficult to enforce and it is extremely difficult to prove motivation for a crime. So the main purpose for tracking hate crimes is reporting rather than enhanced penalties at least locally.